

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR NAME (for an Adult)

Who can ask the court for a name change?

To change your name you **MUST**:

- Be at least 18 years old; AND
- Have lived in Illinois for at least 6 months.

You **CAN NOT** change your name if you have been convicted of:

- A felony and have not been pardoned or you finished your sentence less than 10 years ago; OR
- Identity theft or aggravated identity theft and have not been pardoned; OR
- Felony or misdemeanor: criminal sexual abuse when the victim at the time is under 18 years of age, sexual exploitation of a child, indecent solicitation of a child, or indecent solicitation of an adult, or any other offense that requires you to register as a sex offender, and have not been pardoned.

What forms do I need to fill out to change my name?

- **Request for Name Change:** gives the court the information needed to decide if you can change your name. A person who knows you must also sign the form.
- **Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change:** tells the public you are asking the court to change your name and is published in a newspaper for 3 weeks.
- **Order for Name Change:** is used by the judge to say your *Request for Name Change* is granted or denied.

What costs will I need to pay to change my name?

- **Filing Fee:** to file your forms with the Circuit Clerk.
- **Publication Fee:** to put your notice in the newspaper.
- **Certified Copy Fee:** if your name change is granted and you need certified copies of the court order.

If you cannot afford to pay the filing fee, you can ask the court to file for free. Fill out the *Application for Waiver of Court Fees* to ask the court for a fee waiver. This is a separate set of forms you can find at:

<http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/>.

What do I do after I fill out the forms?

Step 1 – File the forms with the court.

- You must file your forms in the county where you live.
- Find the courthouse in the county where you live:
www.illinoiscourts.gov/circuitcourt/circuitmap/map1.asp
- Make 3 extra copies of each form and bring them to the Circuit Clerk at the courthouse with the originals.
- The Circuit Clerk will give you a court date and time. Write them on the *Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change*. Make sure the court date is at least 8 weeks after the date you file your forms at court.

- The Circuit Clerk will stamp and keep the original forms. Have the Circuit Clerk also stamp the extra copies of your forms.
- Pay the filing fee or ask the court for a fee waiver.
- In most counties it is best to file your forms with the Circuit Clerk in person but in certain counties, you must file online. Check with your Circuit Clerk:
<http://www.ilcourtclerks.org/illinois-court-clerks/>

Step 2 – Publish your *Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change* in a newspaper in the county where you live once a week for 3 weeks in a row.

- Contact a newspaper in your county and set up publication of the notice.
- If there is no newspaper in your county, contact a convenient newspaper published in Illinois.
- Give a copy of the *Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change* to a newspaper.
- The notice must appear in a newspaper for the first time at least 6 weeks before your hearing date.
- Newspapers may charge you a publication fee.
- If you have a fee waiver in your court case, the newspaper is not required to waive your fee for publication. You will need to file a *Motion* asking the court to order the county to pay the cost of publication. You can find the *Motion* form at:
<http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/>.

Step 3 – Get a Certificate of Publication from the newspaper and file it with the court.

- After the notice appears in a newspaper for 3 weeks get a Certificate of Publication from the newspaper.
- Ask the newspaper how you will get the Certificate of Publication. The newspaper will either:
 - Send the Certificate directly to the Circuit Clerk;
 - Mail the Certificate to you; OR
 - Tell you to pick up the Certificate in person.
- Take the Certificate of Publication to the courthouse and file it with the Circuit Clerk before your court date.
- If the newspaper sends the Certificate directly to the Circuit Clerk, make sure it arrives before your court date and ask the newspaper to send you a copy.

Step 4 – Go to your court hearing.

- Get to the court 45 minutes before your hearing time.
- Bring these items to your court date:
 - Photo I.D.;
 - Stamped copies of: *Request for Name Change*, *Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change*, and *Certificate of Publication*; *Order for Name Change*; AND

Find Illinois Supreme Court approved forms at: <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/>.

- Other papers related to your *Request* (like papers showing that at least 10 years have passed since completion and discharge of your sentence).
- Confirm the court room number and go to that room.
- Check in quietly with the judge's clerk, court assistant, or court bailiff. Wait for your name and case number to be called.
- You may be placed under oath, answer the judge's questions truthfully.
- The judge will either GRANT or DENY your *Request*. The judge will write this on the *Order* and sign it.
- File the signed *Order* with the Circuit Clerk.
- If GRANTED, get certified copies of the *Order* from the Circuit Clerk. You need a certified copy of the *Order* to change your name on records like birth certificate, social security card, and a driver's license. There may be a fee for the certified copies.